



I Called On The

Holy

Spirit



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Holy Spirit

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## FOREWORD

The Holy Spirit is the eternal Bond of Love between the Father and the Son in the Blessed Trinity. In a parallel way, the Holy Spirit is the Bond of Love between the Heavenly Father and His adopted sons and daughters. Hence to draw a soul to God is properly the work of the Holy Spirit. And so the secret of success for the Christian apostle — be he clerical or lay — is to make himself totally a servant of the Holy Spirit, — doing the work of the Holy Spirit at the Spirit's bidding. He must daily beg the Gift of Counsel, — “a light, given by the Holy Spirit, by means of which the practical intellect sees and rightly judges what should be done in individual cases, and what are the best means to do it”.

To have known George Schulhoff through many years, as has been my good fortune, is to have witnessed how the Holy Spirit can work in and through a docile and dedicated soul. The case histories here narrated are but a random sampling of hundreds I know he could adduce to prove that “more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”

— Rev. Nicholas H. Gelin, S.J.

## HOLY SPIRIT OPENS DOOR

My wife and I spent a total of six and one-half years visiting patients in the tuberculosis hospital in our community before going on to other hospitals in the city. We became more and more interested as our work progressed.

These apostolic visitations were in response to a craving that had been growing in me all my life. I wanted to share my wonderful religion with others. An inner gnawing gave me no rest until I decided to make an active attempt to do so.

During the course of these years I had approached many priests and explained to them what I wanted to do. Their initial interest, however, waned considerably when they learned from me that I had encountered considerable difficulty in getting through school, that my grades in both elementary and high school were barely passing ones, and that I had no higher education.

Their answers were almost identical. "You had better attend to your own work, George," they said, "and leave the teaching to us."

It was hard for me to accept this. I prayed to the Holy Spirit. Many of my prayers were inquiries. Why did I have such an intense desire for such work when I was considered ineligible to perform it? Did the fact that I had the desire mean that I should pursue it? That God was urging me on in spite of a seeming obstacle?

Even when one priest after another rejected my ideas I did not grow discouraged. The fact that I was getting nowhere failed to dampen my enthusiasm. I was still praying hard.

I then conceived the idea that the Holy Spirit was guiding me to a different approach. One does not need a college degree to pass out Catholic magazines to sick people. My wife and I could do this work together. We knew enough about our religion to teach the rudiments of it to interested non-Catholics who might ask questions of us after reading the magazines.

A tuberculosis hospital seemed to be a good starting point as the patients

were long term ones. I called the nearest Franciscan Monastery to learn the name of the chaplain. I knew the Franciscans were in charge of the spiritual work at the hospital.

When I contacted Father Severin, the chaplain, I merely told him that my wife and I would like to pass out Catholic magazines to the patients. I was careful to say nothing about teaching catechism. He told us to come on out.

Father met us at the door of the hospital. He was a complete stranger to both of us. His greeting was overly cheerful and he helped us to unload our burden of magazines on a nearby bench.

"I am very happy to have someone willing to help me," he said. "The magazines can wait until later. I have more important work for you to do."

Emy and I exchanged glances. The brown-robed friar said, "You wait here Mrs. Schulhoff, I have a young lady whom I want you to meet. She needs help with her catechism."

Taking me by the arm the chaplain said, "Come along, George, I have a young man for you to help."

"But Father," I protested as he piloted me down a long corridor, "You know nothing about my wife nor myself. You have asked no questions of us. How do you know we are capable of doing what you are asking of us?"

"I have so many people waiting for instructions," he said, "it is impossible for me to get around to all of them. If you can pass out magazines you can help the patients with their catechism."

At that time there were literally no lay people permitted to explain or teach the catechism to non-Catholics. After all the years we had spent ing to do this very thing and after all the rebuffs along the way we were more than amazed when the chaplain was so insistent on having us do what we had been told we could not do.

His words, "Come along," echoed in my mind down through the corridors, pungent with antiseptics and detergents, and into the wards. After all the years of waiting we were on our way.

Not only did I believe that the Holy Spirit had opened a door for us, but my faith in His guidance was redoubled.



## ANTAGONISTIC NURSE IS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“What do you do besides handing out magazines?” a nurse in one of the busiest hospitals in the city asked me a little ironically as I offered a patient an old issue of a Catholic publication.

“We instruct those who want to enter the Church,” I replied amiably. “We answer questions which non-Catholics would like to have explained, and are generally helpful in any way possible.”

“It would seem to me,” she said crossly, “that you would devote your time to helping your own people first.”

“The chaplain takes care of our own people,” I explained.

“He doesn’t do much for a woman down the hall,” the nurse countered. “She has asked me time after time to call the priest for her and I oblige, but he doesn’t.”

“He is a busy man,” I pointed out. “Give me the room number and the name of the patient and I will see what I can do.”

In spite of the apparent antagonism of the nurse I have always been grateful to her for bringing Flora to my attention.

I proceeded to the room of the patient in question and greeted her cheerfully. She was alone and responded verbally but without turning her head. It was obvious she was observing me out of the corner of her eye.

I walked directly into her line of vision and went right to the point. "A nurse tells me," I said, "that you frequently ask for the priest and he doesn't respond. Hasn't he ever called on you?"

"He has been here," she admitted, "but he never comes when I need him most, when I am afraid I am going to die."

"But your condition is not serious," I said.

"Yes it is," she contradicted. "I cannot move out of this bed."

"Are you paralyzed?"

"Yes, I cannot move a muscle."

"That doesn't seem credible," I said, "I just saw you pull up the sheet

and I have noticed that you moved a foot. What do the doctors say about your condition?"

"They pay no attention to me."

I realized she must be in a confused mental state. She did not even look bad, had a good color, and was brought a tray of food as I was leaving the room. I noticed that the nurse had made no attempt to feed her as would have been the case with a paralyzed person.

When I consulted with the chaplain of the hospital about this young woman he sighed heavily and said, "She is quite a problem. She has only been here a week and has already received Holy Communion twice. She is not on the critical list and I am not a doctor. I cannot run to her bedside every time she asks for me. Talking to her doesn't do any good. I don't know what more I can do for her."

The nurses reported that they were under instructions from the doctor to lift her out of bed several times a day and walk her up and down the corridor to prove to her that she was not paralyzed and could walk if she chose to do so.

I checked with her private physician in addition to the doctor on the

floor. Both of them agreed that she was too much of a problem for the hospital to handle and she would have to be transferred to a mental hospital where they would know how to deal with her.

As she seemed to appreciate my interest in her I decided to visit her once again before she was transferred. It was my guess that she had confidence in me merely because I was in no position of authority over her. I gave her no orders, so she did not resent me as she did every one else.

As I sat in her room I pondered over the fact that she was mentally normal in every other way except for insisting that she was dying and asking for a priest, and in believing that she was actually paralyzed and could not walk.

I wanted desperately to help her. Calling upon the Holy Spirit for guidance I asked why I felt so compelled to make this final visit. "While I am not worthy to be Your servant," I prayed, "is there anything I can do or say to help this poor soul?"

After a few moments a thought struck me, but I hesitated to put it into words and continued to pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Suddenly I decided I would voice the question even though the subject had never been communicative on this particular topic during our many conversations.

“When you went to confession,” I said, driving right to the point almost ruthlessly, “Why didn’t you tell the priest that you had been practicing birth control?”

I was almost as shocked at asking so personel a question as she was in hearing me say it. Her face became so violently red I feared the blood would burst through the pores.

In a voice that was almost inaudible she admitted that she had been practicing birth control and had not confessed the sin.

“Confessing it to me solves no problem,” I explained, “I do not have the power to absolve you. Only a priest can do that. But to make it easier for you to confess it I will talk to the chaplain before I leave and I am certain he will be in to see you in the morning.”

The nurses and doctors on the staff were completely bewildered when they found a perfectly normal and happy patient after the chaplain had

taken his departure from the sick room. I learned later that her own personal physician was just as surprised at the turn of events. He decided it was completely unnecessary to transfer the woman to a mental hospital and she went home a few days later.

The incident proved to me that the antagonistic nurse and I were but the instruments of the Holy Spirit in His sanctification of a troubled soul.

## IF THE DOCTOR AND PRIEST HAD ONLY ASKED THE SANCTIFIER FOR HELP

My wife and I were returning home from a convention of the Third Order of St. Francis. We saw a priest sitting alone in our car as the train sped along to its destination. We introduced ourselves to the priest and he invited us to sit with him.

During the course of our conversation we mentioned the work which we were doing in various hospitals in the city. Our train companion became interested and said he had a friend who was a patient in one of the hospitals we had mentioned.

“This man is a graduate of a Catholic university,” he said. “I fear he is a very lonely man. I happen to know the chaplain in that hospital and he has given me nothing but poor reports of the man. It might help to have a lay man call on him. Will you do so?”

I promised that I would and wrote the name of the man and the hospital in my notebook to make certain I would not forget.

It never occurred to either of us to ask the priest for any information about the patient or his problem. This was to prove quite a handicap in dealing with the man in the weeks to come.

On our next visit to the hospital I looked up the man in question and found him alone in a private room. At the time I thought he would have been better off in a room with a companion or two. But later I changed my mind on this as he would have proved to be too disagreeable for other patients.

The patient stared moodily at me when I entered his room and ignored my friendly greeting. I told him I had met a friend of his who had suggested that I pay him a visit. I gave him the name of the priest. This should have served as an introduction, but there

was still no reply. It was as though he had never heard of the priest.

“Father *asked* me to call on you,” I persisted.

As the conversation was solely one-sided and I could think of nothing further to say to him I started to leave. Just as I reached the door he called after me, “I’ve treated my wife like Hell.”

I returned to his bedside and assured him that we all make mistakes and that God is always ready to forgive us. I suggested that his wife had long since forgiven him as well.

The patient merely stared at me during my recital and never spoke another word. His attitude was quite baffling, but in doing work like ours one meets all kinds of people with varying problems who have strange reactions to them.

On my next visit to the hospital I sought him out again. He had made no evident progress. The same old problem seemed to be weighing heavily upon his conscience. After I had exhausted myself trying to make conversation I gave up.



Once again just as I was leaving the room he called after me, "I've treated my wife like Hell."

During the period between the fifth and sixth visits I offered all my Masses, communions and prayers for this unfortunate man, who was an utter stranger to me but who was in such desperate need.

I always greeted him cheerfully upon entering the room but never received a reply. Yet the man's eyes were always on me in kind of a dare. Was he really asking for help in this strange manner?

As we faced one another on my sixth visit, each with searching and probing eyes, I prayed to the Holy Spirit. What am I doing in this room, I asked in my prayer, when I can find no way of helping this man?

I told the Holy Spirit I wanted to be an instrument and would make any sacrifice required of me if only I could help this patient.

A penetrating thought pierced my consciousness. *Do not become angry, but pretend to be angry.*

Such an idea was in direct opposition to my beliefs. One did not become

angry or forceful with sick people. But I had asked the Holy Spirit for guidance and this thought had made its appearance, so I decided to act upon it.

Pretending to be very angry I shouted at the patient in a loud and challenging voice, "The trouble with you is that you are too lazy to do anything about whatever is bothering you. Do you think that merely because of this kind of work I do not have to go to confession? Do you think the chaplain never commits a sin? The only difference between the three of us is that the chaplain and I are trying to do something to amend our lives while you lay there in all your sin and guilt and feel sorry for yourself."

I must have put on quite a display of temper as when I left the room I felt a battery of eyes on me in the corridor. The doctors, nurses, and other people in the hall looked searchingly at me, some reprovably so, but I paid no attention to anyone and hurried away out of their sight.

I did not return to the obstreperous patient for a week. When I went to his room I was surprised to find that he was no longer there. Another man occupied his bed.

I went to the desk to inquire about the former patient.

“He has gone home,” the nurse reported happily. “He finally responded and when he did his condition improved.”

I was so surprised at this turn of events that even though the nurse gave me the man's address I did not look him up. Instead I paid a visit to the priest whom I had met on the train, the one who had put me on the man's trail in the first place.

He was greatly pleased at my report of his friend's progress and told me something which I had not known. To my amazement I had never in my seven weeks of efforts thought of checking with this priest to ascertain the nature of the man's basic problem.

“I sent three different priests to that man,” he said, “and every one of them failed. One of the foremost psychiatrists in the city was working on his case. His papers had already been processed. He was to be committed to a mental hospital.”

Instead he had returned home reconciled with his wife and has gotten along very well since.

Had the doctors and the priests relied too heavily on their own abilities to reach the patient, I wondered, or had I been chosen by God to be the instrument in this case to emphasize once again that He is the Sanctifier?

## SOMETIMES THE HOLY SPIRIT USES US WHEN WE LEAST SUSPECT

I drove to the Convent of Mary Reparatri Retreat House in Cincinnati where my wife was concluding an eight-day retreat. It was around five o'clock of a Sunday evening.

As usual the Mother Directress accompanied the departing retreatants to the door. As I picked up my wife's grip to carry it to the car I said teasingly to Mother Directress, "When are you going to give a retreat for non-Catholics?"

As I knew she was aware of my work among prospective converts I expected her to take it as a joke. She made no reply but there was a hint of bewilderment in her faint smile.

Two weeks later our phone rang. The Mother Directress of the Retreat House was on the line.

"How would April 27th to April 29th do?" she asked.

It was my turn to be surprised. "April 27th to 29th for what?" I asked.

"For your retreat for non-Catholics," was the stunning reply.

"Oh Mother," I replied hastily, "I was only kidding you."

"But I am not kidding," she responded. "I am in earnest."

"Do you really think it can be done?" I stammered. "Who will you have for Retreat Master?"

"That is your problem not mine," was the quiet reply. "The retreat for non-Catholics was your idea. I am ready and able to provide the rooms, food and retreat house. The rest is up to you."

This was far more than I had bargained for, but there was nothing to do but rise to the challenge.

I knew an elderly Jesuit priest, Father Lilly, who had been a convert in his youth and spent his spare time working with non-Catholics. He was delighted with the prospect of giving

a retreat to non-Catholics and agreed to serve as Retreat Master.

But once again I was in for a shock.

“When you figure out the schedule you want to follow, Father,” I suggested, “Let me have it so I can have copies printed.”

“It is up to you to do that,” the priest said. “You asked me to give a retreat to non-Catholics and I agreed to do so. But I do not make up schedules. I just follow them. You let me know when I am supposed to talk and I will be there.”

My teasing remark to Mother Directress had certainly brought forth challenges I had never expected.

Not the least of the problems was to sign up enough non-Catholics to make the retreat possible. But on the day appointed, April 27th, seventeen non-Catholics trooped into the Catholic Retreat House for a brand new spiritual experience. No Catholic was permitted to accompany a non-Catholic friend. This retreat was for non-Catholics only.

So far as is known this was the first retreat given to non-Catholics exclusively in this country. Incited

by a quip, responded to by a dare, it turned out to be a huge success.

God's ways are strange. We never know when we are being used as an instrument by the Holy Spirit. Retreats for non-Catholics are no longer a novelty.

## HE ACCEPTED THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ours is a neighborhood of small businesses. Many of the merchants are Catholic and we formed the practice of making an annual retreat together.

We were never joined, however, by the members of one firm, a family of plumbers whose office was near my own business. The three brothers went out on service calls. Their father, while well along in years, was able to take the calls and manage the office, thus saving the firm from the expense of outside help.

I had always been particularly attracted to one of the brothers because of his very devout attitude in church. St. Francis de Sales, one of the beautiful old Gothic churches in the city, is almost in our business block, and has always exerted an influence on the neighboring merchants

even though most of us live in suburban parishes farther out.

No member of this particular family, however, made the Merchants' Retreat. After the father died I approached the one whom I knew the best and invited him to make the retreat with us.

"With Pop gone it would be impossible for me to get away," he said, adding, "It wouldn't be fair to go, although I really would love to do so. I am very anxious to make a retreat some day."

A retreat promoter is usually prepared for a variety of reasons why those approached and invited cannot attend the spiritual exercises. Usually they are such shallow ones we can persuade the doubters to change their minds and join us. But this man's excuse was so valid that I did not use any persuasion on him.

Even though I suspected the excuse would be the same one the following year, nevertheless I made the effort and extended him an invitation to join us. Once again he begged to be excused.

Several more years went by. One of the brothers died. This made it even



more difficult for the plumber to make the Merchants' Retreat.

After the passage of several additional years the second brother decided to take a vacation in Florida during the very month in which our annual retreat was usually held.

On hearing of his departure I considered it useless to bother the remaining brother knowing he could scarcely get away when there was no one else to keep the business in operation.

To my surprise he approached me and asked, "Won't it soon be time for the Merchants' Retreat?"

"Yes, in two weeks," I said, apologizing quickly, for having passed him over.

"Can you get me registered at this late date?" he asked.

"Yes, but how can you get away now?" I inquired curiously, "When there is no one to take care of your business?"

"I will simply close the shop and go," he replied. "I have been wanting to go with you for so long that I am not going to let the opportunity of making

a retreat pass me by this year regardless of the loss of business or inconvenience."

I soon had the plumber registered for the retreat. I had always admired him for the way he prayed, oblivious to every one around him, alone with God in heart and mind.

I was even more inspired by him during the religious exercises in the chapel at the retreat house. He was making every moment count.

After the close of the retreat we all returned to our private lives and our businesses. Exactly ten days later I heard some shocking news.

This fervent Catholic plumber whom I had admired for so long, had always been a very healthy man, had never had a sick day in his life.

But on this day he went home for lunch and complained to his wife that he was having some very unusual pains. One look at him convinced her that he was a sick man. She helped him from the table to a nearby couch.

"You had better call the doctor," he suggested.

Before she reached the phone her husband was dead.

## I DON'T KNOW, BUT GOD DOES (Paul 2 Cor. 11, 19-33)

On entering the restaurant where I usually have my noon-day lunch I recognized a lovely girl of nineteen or twenty years of age who was seated at the counter.

She was a teller at the bank across the street from my place of business, and had taken care of my banking on various occasions. As her name was posted at her window I knew her as Virginia.

In as much as I was not a total stranger to her I took the liberty of sitting beside her at the counter and of striking up a conversation. Up until this chance meeting we had never discussed anything but business. Therefore I knew nothing about her personal life, her family or background, or if she was Catholic.

"Have you been on a vacation, Virginia?" I asked. "I've missed seeing you at the bank."

"Yes, I have just returned from a two weeks' visit to Mexico," she replied.

"What difference did you find in the people there to our people here at home?" I asked merely to make conversation, but she became very serious about the matter.

"It's odd that you should ask that," she said, "because during the two weeks I was there I was plagued by that very question. Why is it that moral standards are so different between Catholics in both countries? Mexico is predominantly Catholic country yet it has a high rate of illegitimacy."

"It is very difficult," I countered to compare the two countries. Education and economics are important factors." But even as I mentioned these mitigating circumstances I comprehended from the way she said *Catholic* that the comparison she was making had greater depth than the surface question. It seemed to indicate a personal need.

As I am always seeking converts no matter where or when I may find

prospects, I prayed to the Holy Spirit, what can I do or say that will help this soul? The thought which then came to me was an odd one but I had long since learned to act upon such thoughts without questioning and with good results.

Almost before Virginia had finished speaking, I asked, "What else is there about the Catholic religion that you would like to know Virginia?"

"There is a lot I would like to know," she said quickly.

"How soon would you like to start instructions?" I asked, surprising myself more than my companion.

Her reply came back swift and sure, "As soon as possible."

Six months from that very day Virginia was baptized. But her story did not end at that point. She has always been willing to assist me in forwarding the work in which my wife and I are engaged.

On one occasion I was scheduled to give a talk on my experiences in seeking and finding converts and how the Holy Spirit seems to provide the answers at difficult moments. I decided to use Virginia's case as an object

lesson, asked for and received her cooperation.

I asked her to be present at the meeting. She did not even know what I intended to ask her to do or say, but she had confidence in my judgment.

I told the assembled people how I had met Virginia and of our chance meeting in the restaurant near our work. I recounted our conversation to them word for word as it had taken place.

To make it more effective I asked Virginia to stand up and report whether or not I had changed the substance or words of our unusual conversation. She said no and confirmed everything I had said.

“Now Virginia,” I said to her, “I am going to ask a question of you which I have never asked before and which we have never discussed up to this time.”

She seemed a little mystified by the procedure as I went on to explain that I wanted her to testify before these people that I had never asked this particular question which I had in mind. I assured her she would not be embarrassed by it and she agreed to the condition.

I then put the question. "Virginia, to how many Catholics have you talked as you did to me in the hope that they would invite you to learn more about Catholicism or lead you toward the Church? But before you answer — have I ever asked this question of you before?"

"You have never asked the question before," she said.

"Now for the question itself," I pressed. "What is the answer to it?"

"In the past five years," Virginia said, "I used this method to attract Catholics to me at least thirty to forty times without success. What really struck me," she added, "was the fact that you *knew* I was not really interested in the morals of Mexico, you *knew* my reason for asking it, you *knew* what I wanted."

I knew in the depth of my soul that I had not known her need, that my response to her indirect plea had come to me on the spur of the moment *after* I had prayed to the Holy Spirit to help me to help her.

## SUMMARY

In our work of convert-seeking, we try to bear in mind that *Faith is a Gift*—

bestowed by the Holy Spirit. The theological virtue of Faith can be neither learned, taught, nor reasoned. Faith is a gift bestowed on ourselves or others through the grace of God — if we cooperate with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Faith can be given to others only by the Holy Spirit. But with longing to share our gift with others, we listen to Christ telling us:

“Amen I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Arise, and hurl thyself into the sea’ it shall be done. And all these things whatsoever you ask for in prayers, believing, you shall receive.”  
(Matthew 21, 21-22)

On another occasion Christ said:

“If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘remove from here;’ and it will move.”  
(Matthew 17, 19).

We know that Christ thirsts for souls. We know we are asking of God the thing God Himself wants and desires.

We firmly believe God will give His Gift to anyone, regardless of circumstances if we but *believe* He will do it, and willingly accept the price He



asks (effort, prayer, inconveniences, suffering, humiliations, penances).

We believe that only *God* knows what will bring a particular soul to his knees (we have failed to find two cases alike) so ALL YOU AND I CAN DO IS stand willingly and humbly ready to accept *His* guidance.

## **I CALLED ON THE HOLY SPIRIT**

By George E. Schulhoff

"O Holy Spirit, Soul of my soul, I adore Thee. Enlighten, guide, strengthen and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that Thou permittest to happen to me, only show me what is Thy will."

Cardinal Desire Joseph Mercier  
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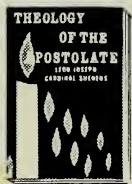
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